



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
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For Immediate Release July 6, 2015
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**Chairwoman Dimitrijevic Responds to Proposals that Would Wipe-Out Public Transparency
and Erase Checks and Balances in Milwaukee County Government;
Requests that Assembly and Senate Remove Item #67 in Motion #999 from the State Budget**

On Friday, legislation was adopted by the Joint Committee on Finance that would shut the public out of nearly every Milwaukee County government function and drop a cloak of secrecy over the sale of publicly-owned land and contracts worth millions of dollars in taxpayer resources. These proposals look like a wish list from the Executive, and I ask the Senate and the Assembly to remove the provisions from the state budget, as they are doing with the open records exemptions.

These proposals further consolidate powers within the Office of the Executive, and an unchecked Executive is dangerous for the one million residents who live in Milwaukee County. The public, the media, and legislators should ask what if former County Executive Tom Ament had been granted these consolidated powers.

These provisions target Milwaukee County's diverse community in an attempt to silence their voices; our nearly one million residents should have the same access to representation fair representation as all Wisconsinites. These legislative proposals would bring Milwaukee County out of line with other Wisconsin Counties.

The provisions would make public dealings of Milwaukee County such as contracting, procurement, and the sale of county land a secret because the Executive could simply take unilateral action without public notice and without holding a single public hearing resulting a complete lack of transparency.

Surely, it would be easier for the Executive to spend the public's money when there is no accountability. However, we believe the public deserves to know what their local government is doing with their money and be able to hold elected officials accountable for their actions and Milwaukee County's \$1 billion budget.

Over the last couple of years, the Board has led efforts to strike an historic compromise between the War Memorial and the Milwaukee Art Museum. If these provisions had been law at the time, this initiative that honored our veterans could not have moved forward. Additionally, we are concerned that the adoption of these measures could jeopardize the future of O'Donnell Park and our compromise to establish a public-to-public partnership with the Milwaukee Art Museum.

The diverse constituency of Milwaukee County is not served well when every time the Executive doesn't get his way back home he runs to Madison and asks the Republicans in the legislature to enhance his powers

at the expense of their voice. I ask legislators to maintain a measure of checks and balances in Milwaukee County government, and invite the Executive to join me in this call for public transparency.

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